

ANARCHIST AGE



WEEKLY REVIEW

An Anarchist Society is a voluntary non-hierarchical society based on the creation of social and political structures which allow all people equal decision making power and equal access to society's wealth.
P. O. Box 20, Parkville, Vic 3052 Australia - Telephone: (03) 8508 9856 - (24 hr Message Centre)
Internet: <http://anarchismedia.org/weekly.htm>. Email: anarchistage@yahoo.com

'Anarchist World This Week' Radio Program on the net <http://www.3cr.org.au>

....."COMMUNALISATION - The Transfer of Power & Wealth"

from the Hands of the Private Sector & the State, Into the Hands of the Community"

Number 793

23rd June – 29th June 2008

"WE SWEAR BY THE SOUTHERN CROSS TO STAND TRULY BY EACH OTHER & FIGHT TO DEFEND OUR RIGHTS & LIBERTIES"- EUREKA REBELLION OATH 1854

"FREEECONOMICS"

Peter Munro's front page article on "Freeconomics" Sunday Age (22/6), fails to make the important distinction between advertising for an economic system based on the creation of profits irrespective of the human, social and environmental costs and the economic relationships that exist within an economy based on the free exchange of goods and services.

Munro's examples of "freeconomics" are an extension of the "free" to air television model. They reinforce, not challenge capitalism as the dominant economic model. Free economics is not based on the idea of paying for goods and services or bartering for goods and services, it is based on the idea that human needs can be met in a society when everybody contributes according to their ability and each takes according to their needs.

The "freeconomics" scenario raised by Peter Munro in the Sunday Age is a way that astute advertisers can buy people's time and attention in an era when people are becoming immune to traditional advertising methods. Faced with the problem of catching people's attention in a cluttered marketplace where technological innovations are making it increasingly difficult for companies to protect intellectual property rights, "freeconomics" is just another cynical attempt by advertisers to capture people's attention by drawing them into contracts in a variation of the try before you buy scenario that has been used by advertisers for generations.

If only we practised free economics and lived in a society based on the satisfaction of real, not manufactured, human needs where wealth was held in common and used for the common good, not to generate profits for a minority, then we wouldn't be facing the very real crisis we face in the 21st century because we have been so stupid as to allow an economic system that soils our own nest, capitalism to dominate every facet of human activity on the planet.

BYE!! BYE!!

The tax cuts like the childcare rebates that will come into effect next week, have disappeared before they have even appeared in workers pay packets. Increased petrol, rent and mortgage costs

have already eaten up the tax cuts that will be delivered next week, while an 11% increase in childcare fees by Australia's largest provider of childcare services has taken care of the increased government childcare rebates.

The childcare increases are especially galling because they have occurred as a direct result of government policy during the last decade that put the interests of private childcare operators before the interests of the not for profit childcare sector. The Howard government's penchant for all things private has helped to create privately owned monopolies in the childcare and the nursing home sector.

A decade of laws that have put the interests of privately owned corporations before the interests of the not for profit sector has driven many of the not for profit operators out of business. Increasing taxpayer funds have been directed away from the not for profit sector into the hands of private operators during the last decade. The community is now beginning to reap the dubious benefits of the privatisation of education, the commonwealth employment service, the nursing home and the childcare sector.

The marginalisation of the not for profit sector has handed over the bulk of these services to private operators who need to extract every last penny from the business for the benefit of owners and majority shareholders. The solution to the current crisis doesn't lie in increasing tax funded rebates or the establishment of more privately owned childcare facilities and nursing homes to compete with the government funded privately owned corporations that currently dominate the sector. The solution to the current crisis lies in giving preferential treatment to the not for profit sector so they will be able to compete on a level playing field against private corporations who for far too long have enjoyed the lions share of the tax payer dollar that has been allocated to provide childcare and nursing home care to Australians.

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

What I love about the Australian media is how the most trivial subjects attain a life and death dimension about them. Take the recent "controversy" to make the headlines; It seems the poor folk at the

National Trust had the brilliant idea of raising the topic of heritage-listing a little bit of graffiti at an international conference on intangible heritage that will be held in Melbourne next week. Not an earth shattering event in anybody's eyes except the Australian media.

Graffiti has always been the tool used by the outsider. Faced with the problem of articulating ideas in a privatised landscape, the graffitist reclaims private space for public comment. Graffiti is nothing new, every archaeologist has been confronted by people whose lives have been immortalised when they carved a message on a stone that has withstood the test of time. As expected, the usual suspects pontificated about the damage graffiti does to the community. They laud Corporate polluters who have the cash to have their message splashed across buildings and billboards, while publicly castigating "vandals" who refuse to pay for the privilege of having their message displayed in the public domain.

Councils trying to placate the anti-graffitists in their midst have embarked on a campaign to criminalise graffiti. The Victorian state government has come to the party enacting laws that are designed to fill the state jails with graffitists – as if there weren't more serious crimes for the state to target. Considering the extent of the public outcry about The National Trust's suggestion you'd think we'd been invaded by Martians. You really have to wonder about a society that recoils at the sight of a naked adolescent in a gallery and graffiti in the laneways but allows the cash for comment crowd to visually pollute the environment with messages that promote products that have a far greater impact on people's health than a little bit of graffiti here and there could ever cause.

NEW SENATE

The Opposition stranglehold in the Senate will end at midnight on the 30th June. From the 1st July the Labor Party will be able to have its legislative agenda passed in parliament with the support of the new independent Senator Nick Xenophon, Family First Senator Steve Fielding and the five Green Senators. The four Democrat Senators were finally tossed out of Federal parliament as a result of the Democrat's decision in 1999 to allow the Howard government to introduce the

G.S.T. Dreaming about their glory days, the Democrats are pinning their hopes on Kevin Rudd calling a double dissolution election.

If the Senate blocks a government bill three times, the Prime Minister has the option of calling a double dissolution election to break the Senate deadlock. In a double dissolution election all Senate seats and all House of Representatives seats are up for grabs. Senators are normally elected for six years. Only half the Senators face re-election, every House of Representative election.

The Senate's current conservative agenda reflects the conservative and reactionary National Liberal Party Senators who won Senate seats at the 2004 Federal election. Grasping at straws, the Democrats are relying on the Rudd led Labor government calling a double dissolution election before the next Federal election is due, to break the current conservative stranglehold in parliament. The electoral quota to elect a Senator drops from 14.9% to 7.5% in a double dissolution election.

The chances of Rudd calling a double dissolution election are Buckleys and none. If there is one thing the Labor Party and the Liberal National Party fiercely agree on, it's the need to maintain their stranglehold on parliament. Lowering the Senate quota from 14.9% to 7.5% could result in the election of a myriad of independent and minor party senators that would put the comfortable arrangements to share power the major political parties have enjoyed since Federation in 1901 in doubt. This is the last thing the Labor Party and the Liberal National Party would want.

THALIB MUNIR

The President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono's presidential term has been haunted by the murder of the prominent Indonesian human rights activist, Thalib Munir on a plane flight between Indonesia and the Netherlands in 2004. After a series of botched police investigations, a former Garuda pilot who allegedly was a National Intelligence Agency (BIN) operative, Polycarpus Priyanto, was initially found guilty of the murder of Thalib Munir, then had his conviction overturned and then reimposed in January this year.

The failure to pursue Munir's murderers has called into question the integrity of the Indonesian justice system as well as the nature of the political reforms that have occurred since Suharto, the father of a million dead, stepped down from office nearly a decade ago.

The military and the National Intelligence Agency continue to wield considerable power in Indonesia despite "democratic" reforms. The President has, to a large degree, been reduced to a ceremonial figure and parliament has acted as a rubber stamp for the military. Faced with increased community dissatisfaction with

the piecemeal reforms, the murder of Thalib Munir has become a rallying point for Indonesian dissidents fed up with the governments unwillingness and inability to reign in the military.

Last Thursday the Indonesian government faced with increasing community concerns about rising food and petrol prices and the threat of a dissident movement that was linking the murder of Thalib Munir and increasing food and petrol prices with endemic corruption in the country, arrested General Muchdi, the deputy leader of BIN, who was responsible for covert operations at the time of Munir's murder.

It is unheard of in Indonesia for senior military figures to be charged for crimes they have committed. The stepping down of Suharto the butcher did not result in any of his Generals facing court. They continued to act as if nothing had happened, continuing to exploit the people they had exploited for decades. The only reason General Muchdi was arrested last week is because of increasing community dissatisfaction with the sham reforms that have occurred in Indonesia over the past decade. If President Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono and the military think by making General Muchdi the fall guy for Munir's brutal murder the pressure from the Indonesian people for genuine political reforms that will see those responsible for the economic and social problems Indonesians face today go away, they are badly mistaken.

ANARCHIST QUESTION AND ANSWER

Q. Would political parties exist in an anarchist society?

A. I doubt it, there would be no need for political parties in a society where power is decentralised. Political parties have been traditionally used to gain or seize state power. They are in the business of dealing with the "art" and "science" of political government. They are not in the business of decentralising power through breaking down hierarchy.

In a society where people make decisions about particular issues and elect or appoint delegates to carry out those decisions, there is no need for a political party with a common position on every issue to exist. People would come together about particular issues and possibly form smaller groups to promote that issue, but once that issue was dealt with, they would move onto another issue. What position they would take on the next issue may see two people who were on the same side, now finding themselves on different sides.

The emergence of political parties in an anarchist society would only occur if the structures that had been set up to ensure that direct democratic methods were utilised, were not working. In such circumstances it is quite possible that political parties would be formed to take advantage of the power vacuum that had developed. Anarchism is about dealing with issues, not electing or appointing political parties to make those decisions for us. The emergence of political parties spells the death knell of an anarchist community.

The fundamental difference between other political activists and anarchists is that anarchists work towards the abolition of the very organisations that were formed to create radical alternatives. Anarchists understand there is no role for an anarchist political party within an anarchist society. The emergence of an anarchist community is

dependent on the dissolution of political parties. Other political activists believe that change can only occur if they continue to exercise power in the new society. Anarchists understand transitional states lead to other transitional states. The withering away of the state is dependent on the dissolution of the political parties that have created momentum for change into the federation of community and workplace councils that act as the focus of an egalitarian community.

ACTION BOX

TOMORROW NEVER COMES

: Tomorrow I'm going to plant some trees, tomorrow I'm going to do something about that person who's been annoying me. Tomorrow I'm going to start that novel that's bubbling away inside me. I'm sure you've noticed, as I've noticed, tomorrow never seems to come. Over the years I've found most people's good intentions never seem to bear fruit. The phrase "I'll get to do something about that" is one of the most common phrases I've heard in almost 40 years of radical activity.

"You're right Joe, I should do something about that, unfortunately I'm so tied up with my studies I can't help you now". A few years later I'm told, "I'd like to help but I've got a new job and I'm concerned about my future career with the firm". A few years later, "I've got a few kids now they need me at home, I haven't got any time to help you". A few years later, "I'm sorry I still can't help the kids are going to high school, I need to work two jobs to keep them at school". A few years later, "You don't understand how difficult it is to raise kids, I've got to give them all my attention now because they need my help".

A decade later, "I've been thinking about helping but I've got to look after the grandkids while my children are working, sorry maybe when the grandkids have grown up". A decade later, "Glad to see you, how are things going? I don't feel well, I've got to see the doctor, my health isn't what it used to be. I'd love to help but I can't, maybe when I feel better".

A few years later, "We are gathered here today to honour our good friend, who was going to help, but couldn't quite manage to find the time to help before s/he unexpectedly died in their sleep".

You know the moral of the story – terrible things happen because good people are too busy living their lives to worry about the atrocities perpetrated in their name and on their behalf – tomorrow only comes if you're willing to act about what troubles you today.

AUSTRALIAN RADICAL HISTORY

THE EUREKA SERIES 2008 NO. 7 THE LICENSE FEE

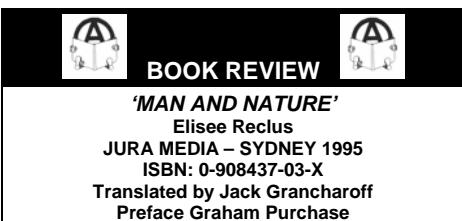
The monthly license fee the miners had to pay to dig for gold was not just a fee the miners paid to help cover the government's expenses to administer the goldfields. In New South Wales and Victoria, the main purpose of the monthly license fee was to stop people flocking to the goldfields. The New South Wales William Charles Wentworth 1853 Goldfields act applied to all persons over fourteen years of age who, irrespective of whether they were mining for gold or not, lived on the goldfields.

The Legislative Council in New South Wales and Victoria were controlled by the squatters who had made a fortune by brutally driving the aborigines off their land and using convict labour and poorly paid labourers to tend to their flocks of sheep. The gold rushes posed a direct challenge to the authority they exercised in the new colonies and the wealth they had accumulated. Without a ready supply of cheap labour they were no longer able to maintain the prominent role in colonial society they enjoyed. The discovery of gold provided a very real opportunity for wage earners in colonial Australia to throw off their shackles and win their independence. The license fee was designed to prevent workers from leaving their jobs and winning their independence on the goldfields. It was also used as an instrument to keep "undesirables" out of the goldfields. The Gold Commissioners had the right to deny licenses to

people who they believed could be potential trouble makers.

Resentment grew at not just the fact that a license fee had been introduced but how it was collected and the way many corrupt goldfields officials and police made small fortunes exploiting the miners. The gold commissioners behaviour did little to endear themselves to the miners. They strutted around the goldfields in gold braid and white gloves protected by soldiers with drawn bayonets and police who acted as thugs. On almost every goldfield a government camp was erected to house the gold commissioners, troops and soldiers. Miners who were arrested for the most trivial offences including their inability to pay the five pound fine imposed for not being able to produce a current license, were chained to trees around the camp and left out in the heat, rain and cold for days, sometimes weeks, to act as an example to every digger on the goldfields about what would happen to them if they did not have a current license. Resentment at the license fee and the way the system was administered grew rapidly on the Victorian and New South Wales goldfields.

NEXT WEEK : The role sly-grog played in the goldfields agitation.



BOOK REVIEW

'MAN AND NATURE'
Elisee Reclus
JURA MEDIA – SYDNEY 1995
ISBN: 0-908437-03-X
Translated by Jack Grancharoff
Preface Graham Purchase

Elisee Reclus can be described as one of those unknown anarchist authors who continues to have a profound impact on 21st century society. He could be described as the founder of the Social Ecology Movement. In an era where the destruction of nature was considered to be the way to achieve progress, Reclus recoiled at the sight of imperialism and capitalism destroying the very foundations of life. Reclus was a prolific writer who championed the idea that communal and bio-regional autonomy held the key to preventing the environmental crisis unbridled human activity would eventually create.

In 1995 JURA BOOKS in Sydney published this 34 page pamphlet in an attempt to bring Elisee Reclus's ideas to a wider audience. Unfortunately very little of the intellectual founder of the Social Ecology Movement's work appears in the English language.

The pamphlet is divided into three distinct parts. A lively and passionate preface written by Graham Purchase in July 1995 is followed by G.P. Marsh's review of Reclus's seminal work *Man and Nature* which appeared under the title – The Impact of Human Activity on Physical Geography in the Revue des Deux Mondes Vol 54 (15th December) 1864. This review is followed by an article that appeared in the Revue des Deux Mondes Vol 63 (15th May) 1866 titled Concerning the Awareness of Nature in Modern Society written by Elisee Reclus.

Almost 150 years after his ideas were initially put down on paper, Elisee Reclus's thoughts are as relevant today as they were when first thrust into the public arena nearly 150 years ago.

If you want to get hold of more of Elisee Reclus's books and pamphlets I suggest you contact

Jura Books
440 Parramatta Rd
Petersham 2049
Sydney, Australia
Tel: 02 9550 9931
Jura@Jura.org.au

If you have access to the internet just Google his name. Thanks to Michael from Ocean Grove, Victoria for providing me with this pamphlet to review.

PERSONAL OBSERVATION

All those commentators who are despairing Australian's produce the highest carbon emissions per head of population and have the highest Body Mass Index (BMI) in the world, should, as an old neighbour used to say to me, "take a Bex and have a good lie down". In an era when unbridled capitalism rules and consumption not citizenship or striving for pie in the sky, is the mark of success we should ignore the doomsayers, put another greasy snag on the barbie and pat ourselves on the back because we are the world champions of the consume, defecate and die 21st century world derby.

Why should we apologise for seizing the opportunity and coming out on top? In an era dominated by an economic system that needs to create ever increasing profits irrespective of the human, social and environmental costs, where governments have become the servants of that small section of society that owns the means of production, distribution and exchange we are being asked to despise ourselves for seizing the gold medal for consumption from our arch rivals the United States, despite our relatively small population.

Talk about a David and Goliath struggle. We have eaten our way into the Guinness Book of Records producing enough methane gas in the process to snatch the greenhouse gold medal from the heavily favoured contenders, the United States and the new boy on the block, China. Don't let the spoil sports, the do-gooders, the wowsers, the killjoys destroy our moment of glory.

We are the world champions
OZZI!! OZZI!! OZZI!!
OI!! OI!! OI!!

We need to enjoy it while we can because the social, economic and cultural forces that have driven us to this pinnacle of human achievement may, I'm afraid, prove to be our undoing.

STOP PRESS

MORE OF THE SAME

The Labor Party's unwillingness to fully dismantle Howard's Workchoices legislation continues to have a major impact on wage earners. It's important we don't

forget Workchoices was all about decreasing wages and altering employment conditions in the employers favour. In an era when deregulation is the name of the game, the state steps aside to allow the market place to find its own level. In a society where the marketplace is dominated by a few unaccountable corporations deregulating the economy puts the ball firmly in the hands of the corporate sector.

Unwilling to harm their relationship with the corporate world, the Rudd Labor government is happy to use the rhetoric of dismantling Workchoices while only making cosmetic changes to the Workchoices legislation. It is still unlawful for Australian workers to withdraw their labour outside an enterprise bargaining period. It is still illegal for workers in the construction industry to refuse to answer questions about legal legitimate workplace activities they are involved in.

The "fair" pay commission continues to set the minimum wage. The Arbitration and Conciliation Commission continues to be sidelined in workplace disputes. Workers continue to be at the mercy of employers despite changes to Workchoices. It's ironic the Rudd Labor government has decided to turn its back on the very people who elected them into office, while continuing to support the very people who threw their support behind the Howard government for so long.

The Rudd Labor government needs to remember who butters its bread. The tens of thousands of unionists and activists who threw their support behind the election of a Labor government must be feeling betrayed by the Labor Party's decision to pander to their traditional enemies while ignoring their supporters. The Rudd Labor government's unwillingness to use what little power they are able to exercise to help improve the lives of the very people who supported them, highlights how little power parliament is able to exercise. Their unwillingness and inability to tear up Howard's Workchoices legislation highlights that real political power in Australia continues to lie in the boardrooms of publicly unaccountable national and transnational corporations.

Joseph TOSCANO /
Libertarian Workers For A Self-Managed Society.

POEM – Stephen Roberts

NO CHANGE

Rudd's NT intervention
Far too much attention
on the Police and the Military
Not enough on Education,
Jobs, indigenous Health
Imported Bureaucracy the wealth
No advance on Howard's holistic plan
Infrastructure (Housing) gets the can
Development is lopsided
Rudd, the dud, should be chided
for lack of perceptive foresight
Blacks thereby suffer the blight
not having any rights
leading to their plight



ANARCHIST PUBLICATIONS RECEIVED THIS WEEK

ARIVISTA ANARCHICA No.336 JUNE 08, Editrice A, Cos. Post. 17120, Milano 20170, ITALY.
Tel: 02 2896627, Fax: 02 28001271
Email : arivista@tin.it Web: arivista.org

UMANITA NOVA Vol 88 No.22 1st JUNE 08, Settimanale Anarchico, C.50 Palermo 46, 10152, Torino ITALY.
Tel/Fax : (011) 857850, Mobile : 338-6594361
Email : fat@inrete.it

** SIGN THE SEDITION CHARTER - www.seditioncharter.org **

** JOIN DIRECT DEMOCRACY NOT PARLIAMENTARY RULE - www.rulebythepeople.org **

** JOIN US RECLAIM THE RADICAL SPIRIT OF THE EUREKA REBELLION 4am – 4pm WEDNESDAY 3RD DEC 2008. EUREKA PARK (Cnr STAPELL & EUREKA ST, BALLARAT) **

URGENT *URGENT** DEBT ELIMINATION APPEAL **URGENT** *URGENT**

Our debt is currently over \$200.00 - You can help to clear our debt by accessing the AAWR via email instead of receiving it by snail mail. This saves us \$50.00 per year for every person who decides to switch to the email list. Email us at anarchistmedia.org to get onto the email list for the AAWR. You can send us a book of 50cent stamps every month to cover subscription costs or if you decided to send a cheque or money order - make it out to 3CR and we will use that money to help clear our 3CR debt. If you send a cheque or money order made out to 3CR, we will send you out a 3CR receipt. Send cheques and money orders to P.O. BOX 20 PARKVILLE 3052, Melbourne, AUSTRALIA.

